

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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SUBJECT: INR ASSESSMENT OF PLO-MOSCOW RELATIONS

1. WIDE RANGE OF GOVERNMENTS CLOSE TO PLO, INCLUDING
EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, AND USSR, HAVE URGED PLO TO SHELVE
THE DOCTRINAL GOAL OF A SECULAR ARAB-JEWISH PALESTINE AND
SETTLE FOR A SMALLER PALESTINIAN STATE OF THE WEST BANK
AND GAZA. THEIR SUPPORT FOR PLO LEADER 'ARAFAT HAS BEEN
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EXTENDED IN THIS CONTEXT, AND UNTIL RECENTLY 'ARAFAT HAD

APPEARED RESPONSIVE.

--(A) THERE WERE ENOUGH MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE DECISIONS OF THE JUNE 1974 PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL TO SUGGEST THAT THE PLO HAD FINALLY MADE THE DECISION IN PRACTICE, THOUGH NOT IN THEORY, TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL.

--(B) 'ARAFAT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISIONS OF THE RABAT SUMMIT IN OCTOBER ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE PLO WAS MOVING TOWARD ACCEPTANCE OF DE FACTO COEXISTENCE WITH THE ISRAEL OF MAY 1967. THE SUMMIT CONCURRED IN CONTINUATION OF THE NEGOTIATING EFFORT WITH ISRAEL, AND A PLO REPRESENTATIVE TOLD THE PRESS THAT, WITH THE RABAT DECISIONS AND A STRONG GA RESOLUTION, THE PLO COULD GO TO GENEVA.

2. HOWEVER, IN HIS NOVEMBER 13 APPEARANCE BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 'ARAFAT TOOK NO ADVANTAGE OF THIS RARE

OPPORTUNITY TO SEND ISRAEL A CONCILIATORY SIGNAL. INSTEAD, HE OPTED FOR A MAXIMALIST FORMULATION OF A SECULAR STATE WHICH LEFT NO ROOM FOR THE EXISTING STATE OF ISRAEL. ANALYSIS OF THIS SPEECH SUGGESTS THAT THE PLO, WHETHER CARRIED AWAY BY ITS UNPRECEDENTED CHAIN OF POLITICAL SUCCESSES OR CONCLUDING THAT A MINI-STATE ON THE WEST BANK IS UNREALISTIC OR INADEQUATE, HAS NOW GONE BACK TO THE ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE OF DISMANTLING ISRAEL.

3. ACCORDING TO THE SAUDI DOMESTIC SERVICE OF NOVEMBER 20, 'ARAFAT TALKED TO A PRESS CONFERENCE IN RIYADH ABOUT A RECENT ESCALATION OF "MILITARY OPERATIONS WITHIN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HERE AGAIN, BY CONFINING ITS RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, THE PLO COULD HAVE SENT A SIGNAL THAT IT CONSIDERS ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COEXISTENCE CONCEIVABLE. HOWEVER, IN 1974 THERE HAVE BEEN THREE MAJOR TERRORIST OPERATIONS INSIDE ISRAEL PROPER, AND TWO OF THOSE (MA'ALOT AND BEIT SHE'AN) WERE APPARENTLY CARRIED OUT BY THE PDFLP, WHICH IS BELIEVED TO WORK IN CONCERT WITH FATAH. ACCORDING TO THE SAUDI BROADCAST OF NOVEMBER 20, 'ARAFAT STRESSED THAT "THE PLO IS COMMITTED TO THE LIMITS AND

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TRENDS" LAID DOWN AT RABAT. NEVERTHELESS, WHEN HE SPOKE OF ESCALATION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS, HE APPEARS TO HAVE HAD THESE OPERATIONS IN MIND, AND CONSEQUENTLY TO BE INCLUDING ALL OF ISRAEL IN HIS DEFINITION OF "OCCUPIED TERRITORIES."

4. OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE RADICALISM OF 'ARAFAT'S GA ADDRESS CAUSED DISTRESS NOT ONLY IN WESTERN

EUROPE BUT ALSO IN RIYADH AND MOSCOW. WHILE THE USSR HAS GIVEN FAVORABLE NOTICE TO 'ARAFAT'S APPEARANCE AT THE UN, IT HAS AVOIDED ANY HINT OF ENDORSING TE MAXIMUM DEMANDS OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION. ONE SOVIET OFFICIAL IN BEIRUT TOLD THE LEBANESE THAT MOSCOW IS FURIOUS WITH 'ARAFAT. HE SAID 'ARAFAT KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL THAT MOSCOW SUPPORTS ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE AND, CONSIDERING THE SUPPORT THE SOVIETS HAVE GIVEN THE PLO, HE SHOULD NOT HAVE SAID ANYTHING THAT VIOLATED THE SOVIET POSITION.

5. SOME WEST EUROPEAN AND NONALIGNED COUNTRIES ARE NOW TRYING, SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS, TO BUILD A BARRIER AGAINST PALESTINIAN EXTREMISM BY CALLING FOR LANGUAGE IN THE UPCOMING PALESTINIAN RESOLUTION THAT WILL REAFFIRM ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST. INGERSOLL

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